




Islam in America

Session I:

NOVA Life-Long Learning (NOVA-LLI)

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WELCOME

to

Islam in America

Course !

Course Outline

Session 1:

- History of Islam in America: (and watching a video about it)
- Diversity and Demographics of Muslims in America
- African-American Muslims
- Major Muslim Organizations and institutions
- Mosques and Islamic Schools
- Islam in public school books and Islamic Studies in Universities
- Youth challenges
- Muslims in workplace and schools
- Political Participation
- 9/11 and its Aftermath
- Recent American wars
- Islamophobia

Session 2:

- Some unique aspects of daily life of American Muslims
 - Daily prayers
 - Islamic Law and Shai'ah
 - Interacting with other communities
 - Open for any other questions

History of Islam in America

- Islam is not a new religion in America
- American Muslims are often considered as recent immigrants, but they have been a part of American history all along

Video: Featuring a lecture by Jerald Dirks (please watch it)

- **Muslims in American History: A Forgotten Legacy**
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCbLcVTeXIc> (33 mins)
- Sharing historical facts about existence of Muslims in America even before Columbus and in all subsequent stages of American history

Cherokee Nation practiced Islam before Columbus

- For more details, visit:
 - <http://www.sunniforum.com/forum/showthread.php?8508-Islam-and-Native-Americans>
 - <http://www.themodernreligion.com/ht/before-columbus.html>

Muslims in America Before Columbus

- Numerous evidences suggest that Muslims from Spain and West Africa arrived to the Americas at least five centuries before Columbus. It is recorded, for example, that in the mid-tenth century, (929-961 CE), Muslims of African origin sailed westward from the Spanish port of DELBA (Palos) into “the Ocean of darkness and fog”; They returned after a long absence with much items from a “strange and curious land”
- A Muslim historian and geographer AL-MASUDI (871-957 CE) wrote in his book “The meadows of gold and quarries of jewels” that during the rule of the Muslim caliph of Spain Abdullah Ibn Mohammad (888-912 CE), a Muslim navigator, Khashkhash Ibn Saeed Ibn Aswad, from Cordoba, Spain sailed from Delba (Palos) in 889 CE, crossed the Atlantic, reached an unknown territory (unknown land) and returned with fabulous treasures. In Al-Masudi's map of the world there is a large area in the ocean of darkness and fog which he referred to as the unknown territory
- A Muslim historian AL-GUTIYYA narrated that during the reign of the Muslim caliph of Spain, Hisham II (976-1009CE), another Muslim navigator, Ibn Farrukh, from Granada, sailed from Kadesh (February 999CE) into the Atlantic, landed in Gando (Great Canary islands) visiting King Guanariga, and continued westward where he saw and named two islands, Capraria and Pluitana

Columbus and Muslims

- On October 12, 1492 CE, Columbus landed on a little island in the Bahamas that was called GUANAHANI by the natives. Renamed SAN SALVADOR by Columbus.
- GUANAHANI: GUANA (IKHWANA) means 'brothers' and HANI is an Arabic name. Therefore, the original name of the island was 'HANI BROTHERS'. Ferdinand Columbus, the son of Christopher, wrote about the blacks seen by his father in Honduras: The people who live farther east of Pointe Cavinass, as far as Cape Gracias a dios, are almost black in color
- Columbus and early Spanish and Portuguese explorers were able to voyage across the Atlantic (a distance of 2400 Km's) thanks to Muslim geographical and navigational information. In particular maps made by Muslim traders, including AL-MASUDI (871-957CE) in his book Akhbar az-zaman (History of the world) which is based on material gathered in Africa and Asia.
- As a matter of fact, Columbus had two captains of Muslim origin during his first transatlantic voyage: Martin Alonso Pinzon was the captain of the PINTA, and his brother Vicente Yanez Pinzon was the captain of the NINA.
- Columbus admitted in his papers that on Monday, October 21, 1492 CE while his ship was sailing near Gibara on the north-east coast of Cuba, he saw a mosque on top of a beautiful mountain. The ruins of mosques and minarets with inscriptions of Quranic verses have been discovered in Cuba, Mexico, Texas and Nevada. DAVIES, NIGEL Voyagers to the New World, New York 1979
- During his second voyage, Columbus was told by the Indians of ESPANOLA (Haiti), that black people had been to the island before his arrival. For proof, they presented Columbus with the weapons of these African Muslims. These weapons were tipped with a yellow metal that the Indians called GUANIN, a word of West African derivation meaning 'gold alloy'. Oddly enough, it is related to the Arabic word 'GHINAA' which means 'WEALTH'. Columbus brought some GUANINES back to Spain and had them tested. He learned that the metal was 18 parts gold (56.25%), 6 parts silver (18.75%) and 8 parts copper (25%), the same ratio as the metal produced in African metal shops of Guinea.

History of Islam in America

- The last Muslim stronghold in Spain, Granada, fell to the Christians in 1492 CE, just before the Spanish inquisition was launched. To escape persecution, many non-Christians fled or embraced Catholicism. A decree was issued in 1539 CE by Charles V, king of Spain, which forbade the grandsons of Muslims to migrate to the West Indies. This decree was ratified in 1543 CE, and an order for the expulsion of all Muslims from overseas Spanish territories was subsequently published
- Dr. Barry Fell (Harvard University) introduced scientific evidence supporting the arrival, centuries before Columbus, of Muslims from North and West Africa
- Dr. Fell discovered the existence of the Muslim schools at Valley of Fire, Allan Springs, Logomarsino, Keyhole, Canyon, Washoe and Hickison Summit Pass (Nevada), Mesa Verde (Colorado), Mimbres Valley (New Mexico) and Tipper Canoe (Indiana) dating back to 700-800 CE
- Engraved on rocks in the arid western U.S, he found texts, diagrams and charts representing the last surviving fragments of what was once a system of schools - at both an elementary and higher level. The language of instruction was North African Arabic written with old Kufi Arabic scripts. The subjects of instruction included writing, reading, arithmetic, religion, history, geography, mathematics, astronomy and sea navigation.
- There are 484 names of places (villages, towns, cities, mountains, lakes, rivers,.. etc.) in U.S.A, and 81 places in Canada which are derived from Islamic and Arabic roots, for example:
 - Mecca (Indiana), Makkah Indian tribe (Washington), Medina (Idaho), Medina (N.Y.), Medina and Hazen (North Dakota), Medina (Ohio), Medina (Tennessee), Medina (Texas), Medina (Ontario), Mahomet (Illinois), Mona (Utah), Arva (Ontario), ... etc.

History of Islam in America

- After Columbus, the first clearly documented arrival of Muslims in America occurred in the 17th century with the arrival of slaves from Africa, with 15-30% of them being Muslims
- The next significant wave of Muslim immigrants began in the mid-19th century. During the late 19th century until the 1920s, large numbers of Arabs, mostly from Lebanon and Greater Syria, arrived in the United States. Although the majority of these immigrants were Arab Christians, there were sizable clusters of Muslims, most of whom settled in the Midwest. Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb, an early American convert to Islam, established a mosque and mission in New York City in 1893. The first mosque structure built in the United States for the purpose of serving a Muslim community was in Ross, North Dakota (1929) and the oldest surviving mosque is in Cedar Rapids, Iowa (1934)
- The most recent wave of Muslim immigration has come after 1965, the year President Lyndon Johnson sponsored an immigration bill that repealed the longstanding system of quotas by national origin. Under the new system, preferences went to relatives of U.S. residents and those with special occupational skills needed in the United States.
- After 1965, immigration from Western Europe began to decline significantly, with a corresponding growth in those arriving from the Middle East and Asia, with many Muslims

African-American Muslims

- Between the years of 1701-1800, 15-30% of enslaved Africans brought to United States were Muslims
 - Most went through forced conversions to Christianity
 - Some remained Muslims and tried to revive their religion
- Noble Drew Ali: A descendent of Bilali Mohamet
 - Moorish Science Temple of America
 - Had mixed thoughts from Islam, Christianity and Freemasonry
 - About 30,000 members in 1920's; Died in 1929
- Wallace D. Fard:
 - Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the Wilderness of North America
 - Disappeared in 1934

African-American Muslims

- Elijah Muhammad: Nation of Islam
 - Moved headquarter to Chicago and expanded it
 - Died in 1975
- Malcolm X
 - A media star for young black men
 - After performing Hajj in 1964, he withdrew from Nation of Islam, changed his name to El-Hajj Malik Shabazz, and said:
 - “I have eaten from the same plate, drank from the same glass, slept on the same bed or rug, while praying to the same God - with fellow Muslims whose skin was the whitest of white, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, and whose hair was the blondest of blond—yet it was the first time in my life that I didn't see them as 'white' men. Their belief in the Oneness of God (Allah) had actually removed the 'white' from their minds.”
 - He was killed in 1965
- Louis Farrah Khan: revived Nation of Islam in 1978
- Warith Deen Mohammed (son of Elijah Muhammad) established American Muslim Society (a mainstream Muslim group)
 - Made many reforms
 - Died in 2008

Muslims in America - Demographics

- Population
 - No precise census available
 - Estimates: 7- 8 millions
 - 3-4 millions (by some)
- Ethnicity breakdown
 - 34 % South Asians
 - 26 % Arabs
 - 25 % African Americans
 - 15 % Other

Demographics of Converts

- Nearly a quarter of American Muslims are converts/reverts (23%)
- 64% of converts are African American
- 27% White
- 6% Hispanic
- 3% other
- Previous religious affiliation of converts
 - Protestants (67%),
 - Roman Catholics (10%)
 - No religion (15%)

Mosques and Schools

- About 3000 registered mosques in USA
- All have many services, including weekend schools
- Over 120 full time Islamic schools

Metropolitan Areas with Largest Number of Mosques (areas of Muslims concentration)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Areas</u>	<u># of Mosques</u>
• 1	Greater New York City	170
• 2	Southern California	130
• 3	Greater Chicago	120
• 4	Washington, DC Area	100
• 5	Greater Detroit	90
• 6	San Francisco-Bay Area	90
• 7	Greater Philadelphia	90
• 8	Greater Dallas/Fort Worth	75
• 9	Greater Atlanta	65
• 10	Northern New Jersey	60
• 11	Greater Houston	55

Islam in Schools and Universities

- Islam in public school books
 - Very little and mostly distorted
- Islam courses in colleges and universities have focus on Islamic Studies, but not on Islam itself
 - Islam itself would focus on the teachings of the religion (using the primary sources of Qur'an and Sunnah)
 - Islamic Studies: Academic study of the religion
 - Focus on research and views of others about Islam and Muslims in a survey form
 - Recent increase in Islamic studies
 - Need for more competent professors
 - There is a huge gap between academia and community

Youth Challenges

- Dealing with parents and family
- Questioning the need for religion and faith
- Peer pressure
- Secular school and environment
- Influence of entertainment industry
- Challenged with sins that are acceptable in the society, such as adultery (and by-friend and girl-friend relations), drinking alcohol, not listening to parents, following one's whims and desires, etc.
- Challenges with holidays and celebrations

Youth Challenges

- Youth of recent immigrants
 - Dealing with conflicting traditions and cultures
 - Feeling torn in between and lost
- Impact of family environment
- Significance of community involvement

- Hiding one's identity for fear of being judged and discriminated
- Influence of world events and possibility of radicalization
- Need for directing youth frustration into constructive thoughts and legal channels
- Need for studying Islam with a rational approach

Major National Islamic Organizations

- Islamic Circle of North America
 - (<http://www.icna.org>)
- Islamic Society of North America
 - (<http://www.isna.net>)
- Muslim American Society
 - (<http://www.muslimamericansociety.org>)
- Council of American-Islamic Relations
 - (<http://www.cair.com>)
- United States Council of Muslim Organization (USCMO)
 - <http://www.uscmo.org/>
- Muslim Students Association National (MSA-National)
 - (<http://msanational.org/>)

Etc.

Islamic Educational Institutes

- Islamic American University (<http://www.islamicau.org>)
- Zaytuna College (<https://www.zaytuna.edu/>)
- Yaqeen Institute (<https://yaqeeninstitute.org>)
- The Islamic Seminary of America (<https://www.islamicseminary.us/>)
- Bayyinah Institute (<http://bayyinah.com>)
- Fawakih Institute (<http://www.fawakih.com>)
- Al-Maghrib Institute (<http://almaghrib.org>)
- The Fairfax Institute (<http://www.fairfaxi.net>)
 - A branch of International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) - A research institute (www.iiit.org)
- Qurtuba Institute (<http://www.qurtubainstitute.org>)

- Some websites for general Islamic information
 - <http://www.whyislam.org/>
 - <http://www.islamicity.com>

Other Muslim Organizations

- **Relief Organizations**

- Islamic Relief (<http://www.irusa.org>)
- ICNA Relief (<http://icnarelief.org>)
- Helping Hand (<http://www.hhrd.org>)

- **Public Policy Organizations**

- Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ispu.org)
- Muslim Public Affairs Council (mpac.org)

- **Islamic Financial Institutions**

- Guidance Residential (<http://www.guidanceresidential.com>)
- University Islamic Financials (<http://www.universityislamicfinancial.com>)
- Ijara Loans (<http://www.ijaraloans.com>)
- Amana Mutual Fund (<http://www.amanafunds.com>)

- **Muslim Media**

- Guide US TV (<http://guideus.tv>)
- DeenTV online channel (www.deen.tv)
- Islamic Broadcasting Network (www.ibn.net)
- Bridges TV (www.bridgestv.com)

- **Social Services**

- Zakat Foundation of America (<http://www.zakat.org>)
- FAITH (Foundation for Appropriate and Immediate Temporary Help): www.faithus.org
- SSC of every mosque

Muslims in Workplace and Schools

- Performing prayers at school or work (remember required daily prayers)
- Performing ablution in washrooms - washing of face and hands
- Using Lunch break on Fridays for mandatory congregational prayer at local Mosque
- Note dietary restrictions, e.g., strictly no intoxicants and pork
- Excusing from Lunch during the fasting month of Ramadan

Muslims in Workplace and Schools

- Islamic dress code and appearance not to be viewed as secluding
- A modest approach of a Muslim not to be interpreted as lack of confidence and assertiveness
- Shaking hands and any physical contact between opposite genders are generally discouraged (outside of immediate family)

Muslims in Workplace and Schools

- If anything unclear, unusual, or odd is observed or seen, just ask a practicing Muslim
- Learn about Muslims/Islam from Valid (Islamic) sources
- Initiate to break the ice and overcome your doubts and curiosity
- Avoid stereotyping
- Avoid carrying politics to work/school

Political Participation

- Civic activities
- Voting
- Parties

- Seeking to promote family values, prevent crime, combat drug abuse, and encourage other worthwhile social goals

- Distinct views on issues such as abortion, prayer in public schools, welfare reform, immigration, and civil rights

- The defining issue for Muslims is the restriction of civil liberties.

9/11 and Its Aftermath

- Since the 9/11 attacks, Islam has moved from the background to the foreground of the U.S. public sphere
- Loyalty of American Muslims questioned
- Suspicion
- Profiling
- Discrimination
- Fear
- Recent American wars
 - Iraq
 - Afghanistan
 - Syria

Islamophobia

Islamophobia refers to unfounded fear of and hostility towards Islam

- Promoting a deeply mistaken portrayal of Islam as an inherently violent ideology that seeks domination over the United States and all non-Muslims
- It is led by some specific individuals and groups
- One of those groups (SANE) once offered a policy proposal that
 - Would make "adherence to Islam" punishable by 20 years in prison
 - Called for immediate deportation of all non-citizen Muslims
 - Urged Congress to declare war on the "Muslim Nation," which SANE defined as "all Muslims"
 - Text of proposal available at <http://www.cair.com/Portals/0/pdf/SANE-%27adherence-to-islam%27-2.pdf>

Recent rise in Islamophobia - leading to fear and hostility which have led to:

- Stereotyping
- Discriminations against Muslims
- Exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political or social process
- Presumption of guilt by association
- Hate crimes

Islamophobia

Some books and Resources on Islamophobia:

- The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims, by Nathan Lean
- **The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West**, by Todd H. Green
- **The Missing Martyrs: Why There Are So Few Muslim Terrorists**, by Charles Kurzman
- Distinguish facts from fiction
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFsn49QxwI0>
- Bridge Initiative at Georgetown University – tracking Islamophobia:
<http://bridge.georgetown.edu/>
- To sign up and subscribe for Bridge Initiative, see
<http://bridge.georgetown.edu/team/>
- Journal of Islamophobia:
<http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/islamophobia/islamophobia-studies-journal>
- For list of some key think tanks and leaders orchestrating majority of anti-Islam rhetoric, visit
[http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2011/summer/the-anti-muslim-inner-circle\)](http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2011/summer/the-anti-muslim-inner-circle)

Anti-Muslim Legislative Efforts

- Anti-Islam legislation undermining America's ideals of free religious expression and practice
- Banning/restricting use of Shariah law in American courts
- Claiming Shariah as a growing threat to the United States
- They argue that steady adoption of Shariah's tenets is a strategy extremists are using to transform the United States into an Islamic state
- While American Muslims are subject to U.S. laws just like any other citizens and they use Shariah only within U.S. Laws
- Shariah is much more than a legal discourse for Muslims
- It is the basis of all rules that govern the lives of Muslims, including all moral issues and basic etiquettes. Further, all normative discussions within Islam center on Shariah.

Asking for Fairness

- Guarantee of religious freedom for every citizen by the First Amendment
- American Muslims asking same fundamental rights in their personal, familial and religious affairs within the boundaries of the United States Constitution and all local, state and federal laws
- Understand agenda of Islamophobia
 - Extremism and political gains
 - Not to accept their bigotry
- Avoid stereotyping and discrimination
- Do not alienate American Muslims
- Realize their value and being an asset for society

Readings

- Pages 74-83 of “Islam: The Straight Path”
- Pages 243-256 of “Islam for Dummies: Chapter 15”
- The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims, by Nathan Lean
- **The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West**, by Todd H. Green
- **The Missing Martyrs: Why There Are So Few Muslim Terrorists**, by Charles Kurzman
- Bridge Initiative at Georgetown University – tracking Islamophobia:
<http://bridge.georgetown.edu/>
- To sign up and subscribe for Bridge Initiative, see
<http://bridge.georgetown.edu/team/>
- Journal of Islamophobia:
<http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/islamophobia/islamophobia-studies-journal>